



S. 3296 – A bill to extend the authority of the United States Supreme Court Police to protect court officials off the Supreme Court Grounds and change the title of the Administrative Assistant to the Chief Justice

FLOOR SITUATION

S. 3296 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) on July 21, 2008. The Senate passed the bill by unanimous consent on September 25, 2008.

S. 3296 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on September 26, 2008.

SUMMARY

S. 3296 extends the authority of the U.S. Supreme Court Police to protect court officials off the grounds of the Supreme Court for an additional five years, through 2013.

The bill also prohibits judicial officers from accepting honorary club memberships with a value of more than \$50 per year.

BACKGROUND

The House passed a similar bill, H.R. 6855, by voice vote on September 17, 2008. Under current Federal law, the U.S. Supreme Court Police have the authority to protect officials of the Supreme Court in the Supreme Court Building and grounds and adjacent streets. They are also authorized to protect the Chief Justice, Associate Justices, or any other officer or employee of the Court on official duty in any State. However, this authority expires on December 29, 2008.

The Supreme Court of the United States Police force was founded in 1949. Originally, the Police were tasked to provide protection for the recently completed Supreme Court Building. Previously, the Supreme Court had resided in the U.S. Capitol. Today, the Supreme Court Police are responsible for protecting the Chief Justice, Associate Justices, building occupants, and the Court's building and grounds. The force currently has about 125 sworn law enforcement officers.

COST

There is no Congressional Budget Office (CBO) cost estimate available for this bill as of September 26, 2008.

STAFF CONTACT

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